22

DEMOCRACY : REAL AND DECEPTIVE

BY

M. K. GANDHI

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BY
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TO THE READER

I would like to say to the diligent reader of my writings and to others who are interested in them that I am not at all concerned with appearing to be consistent. In my search after Truth I have discarded many ideas and learnt many new things. Old as I am in age, I have no feeling that I have ceased to grow inwardly or that my growth will stop at the dissolution of the flesh. What I am concerned with is my readiness to obey the call of Truth, my God, from moment to moment, and, therefore, when anybody finds any inconsistency between any two writings of mine, if he has still faith in my sanity, he would do well to choose the later of the two on the same subject.

Harijan, 29-4-'33, p. 2 M. K. GANDHI

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DEMOCRACY: REAL AND DECEPTIVE

CHAPTER 1

ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

Democracy must in essence mean the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of the people in the service of the common good of all.

Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 143

We dare not enter the kingdom of liberty with mere lip-homage to Truth and Non-violence.

Young India, 16-2-1922, p. 103

Swaraj can be maintained, only where there is a majority of loyal and patriotic people to whom the good of the nation is paramount above all other considerations whatever including their personal profit. Swaraj means government by the many. Where the many are immoral or selfish, their government can spell anarchy and nothing else.

Young India, 28-7-1921, p. 238

It is Swaraj when we learn to rule ourselves. It is, therefore, in the palm of our hands.

Hind Swaraj, 1958, p. 65

The average individual's soul force is any day the most important thing. The political form is but a concrete expression of that soul force. I do not conceive the average individual's soul force as distinguished and existing apart from the political form of

government. Hence I believe that after all the people has a government which it deserves. In other words, self-government can only come through self-effort.

Young India, 17-9-1925, pp. 321-22

People are the roots, the State is the fruit. If the roots are sweet, the fruits are bound to be sweet.

Young India, 2-2-1928, p. 38

The outward freedom...that we shall attain, will only be in exact proportion to the inward freedom to which we may have grown at a given moment.

Young India, 1-11-1928, p. 363

The first step to Swaraj lies in the individual. The great truth: 'As with the individual so with the universe', is applicable here as elsewhere.

Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Natesan, 4th Edn., p. 409

Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals.

Harijan, 25-3-1939, p. 64

By Swaraj, I mean the government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters...I hope...to achieve the end by demonstrating that real Swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words, Swaraj is to be

attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

Young India, 29-1-1925, pp. 40-41

If Swaraj was not meant to civilize us, and to purify and stabilize our civilization, it would be nothing worth. The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.

Young India, 23-1-1930, p. 26

The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj. The necessaries of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and the moneyed men. But that does not mean that you should have palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But, you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoys. I have not the slightest doubt that Swaraj is not *Poorna* Swaraj until these amenities are guaranteed to you under it.

Young India, 26-3-1931, pp. 46-47

Self-government means, continuous effort to be independent of government control, whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life.

Young India, 6-8-1925, p. 276

Self-government depends entirely upon our internal strength, upon our ability to fight against the heaviest odds. Indeed, self-government which does not require that continuous striving to attain it and to sustain it is not worth the name. I have, therefore, endeavoured

to show both in word and deed, that political self-government, that is, self-government for a large number of men and women, is no better than individual self-government, and, therefore, it is to be attained by precisely the same means that are required for individual self-government or self-rule.

Young India, 1-12-1927, p. 402-03

There is no human institution but has its dangers. The greater the institution the greater the chances of abuse. Democracy is a great institution and therefore it is liable to be greatly abused. The remedy, therefore, is not avoidance of democracy but reduction of possibility of abuse to a minimum.

Harijan, 7-5-1931 p. 99

True democracy is not inconsistent with a few persons representing the spirit, the hope and the aspirations of those whom they claim to represent. I hold that democracy cannot be evolved by forcible methods. The spirit of democracy cannot be imposed from without. It has to come from within.

The Bombay Chronicle, 18-9-1934

I claim [to be a democrat] if complete indentification with the poorest of mankind, an intense longing to live no better than they and a corresponding conscious effort to approach that level to the best of one's ability can entitle one to make it.

The Bombay Chronicle, 18-9-1934

When people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of the people is reduced to a minimum. In other words a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much

State interference is truly democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name.

Harijan, 11-1-1936, p. 380

The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. It is true that it does not exclude, and should not exclude, special representation of special interests, but such representation is not its test. It is a sign of its imperfection.

Harijan, 22-4-1939, p. 99

True democracy or the Swaraj of the masses can never come through untruthful and violent means, for the simple reason that the natural corollary to their use would be to remove all opposition through the suppression or extermination of the antagonists. That does not make for individual freedom. Individual freedom can have the fullest play only under a regime of unadulterated Ahimsa.

Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 143

True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village.

Harijan, 18-1-1948, p. 519

Democracy will break under the strain of apron strings. It can exist only on trust.

Delhi Diary, p. 136, (Edn. 1948)

I hold it to be an utter delusion to believe, that a large number of delegates is in any way a help to the better conduct of the business, or that it safeguards the principle of democracy. Fifteen hundred delegates,

jealous of the interests of the people, broad-minded and truthful, would any day be a better safeguard for democracy than six thousand irresponsible men chosen anyhow. To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect and their oneness, and should insist upon choosing as their representatives only such persons as are good and true.

Autobiography, p. 369, (Edn. 1958)

I am wedded to adult suffrage. . . .Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one, and one of the decisive reasons for me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Musalman, but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes. I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got wealth should have the vote but that a man who has got character but no wealth or literacy should have no vote, or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote for the crime of being a poor man.

Young India, 8-10-1931, p. 297

CHAPTER 2

DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

All society is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the government based wholly on non-violence will be like.

What is happening today is disregard of the law of non-violence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law. The democracies, therefore, that we see at work in England, America and France are only so-called, because they are no less based on violence than Nazi German, Fascist Italy or even Soviet Russia. The only difference is that the violence of the last three is much better organized than that of the three democratic powers. Nevertheless we see today a mad race for outdoing one another in the matter of armaments. And if, when the clash comes, as it is bound to come one day, the democracies win, they will do so only because they will have the backing of their peoples who imagine that they have a voice in their own government, whereas in the other three cases the peoples might rebel against their own dictatorships.

Holding the view that without the recognition of non-violence on a national scale there is no such

thing as a constitutional or democratic government, I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life, — individual, social, political, national and international. I fancy that I have seen the light, though dimly. I write cautiously, for I do not profess to know the whole of the law. If I know the successes of my experiments, I know also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill me with undying hope.

I have often said that, if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means, the end for every nation is complete independence. There will be an international league only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

...For one like me, wedded to non-violence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While I prate about universal non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is, however, a big *BUT*. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.

Harijan, 11-2-1939, p. 8

A Government cannot succeed in becoming entirely non-violent, because it represents all the people. I do not today conceive of such a golden age.

But I do believe in the possibility of a predominantly non-violent society. And I am working for it.

Harijan, 9-3-1940, p. 31

Q.: Why do you say, "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence"? (The questioner is an American friend.)

A.: Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the white man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the Negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought! There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e. without violence. Our weapons are those of Satyagraha expressed through the Charkha, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony, prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-co-operation and civil disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried non-co-operation and civil disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in it promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

Harijan, 18-5-1940, p. 129

When I asked the British soldiers in South Africa during the Boer War they could not tell me what they were fighting for. 'Theirs was' surely 'not to reason why'. They did not even know where they were being marched to. The British people would not be able to give me a more satisfying answer, if I happened to be in London and asked them why their soldiers

were working havoc in Berlin. If the press accounts are to be relied upon, British skill and valour have wrought more havoc in Berlin than have the Germans in London. What wrong have the German people done to the British people? Their leaders have. Hang them by all means, but why destroy German homes and German civilian life? What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? I assert in all humility, but with all the strength at my command, that liberty and democrcy become unholy when their hands are dyed red with innocent blood. I hear the living Christ saying: "These so-called children of mine know not what they are doing. They take my Father's name in vain, for they disobey the central command of my Father!" If my ears do not deceive, I have erred in good company, if I have erred at all.

And why have I uttered the truth? Because I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way. If Britain seeks justice, she must appear before the imperial court of God with clean hands. She will not defend liberty and democracy by following totalitarian methods so far as war is concerned. She will not be able to retrace her steps after out-Hitlering Hitler in war. The last war is a resounding lesson. Her victory, if attained, will be a snare and a delusion. I know mine is a voice in the wilderness. But it will some day ring true. If liberty and democracy are to be truly saved, they will only be by non-violent resistance no less brave, no less glorious, than violent resistance. And it will be

infinitely braver and more glorious because it will give life without taking any.

Harijan, 29-9-1940, p. 302

I have told our people, "Do not depend on military and the police help. You have to uphold democracy, and democracy and dependence on the military and the police are incompatible. You cannot say it is good in one place and bad in another. Military help will degrade you. In a democracy, if the electorate sets up a hooligan as the head of the government, they then lie in the bed they have made or else convert the electorate through Satyagraha if necessary. That is democracy.

Harijan, 12-1-1947, pp. 488-89

CHAPTER 3

UNDER DEMOCRACY BASED ON NON-VIOLENCE

Under Swaraj based on non-violence nobody is anybody's enemy, everybody contributes his or her due quota to the common goal, all can read and write, and their knowledge keeps growing from day to day. Sickness and disease are reduced to the minimum. No one is a pauper and labour can always find employment. There is no place under such a government for gambling, drinking and immorality or for class hatred. The rich will use their riches wisely and usefully, and not squander them in increasing their pomp and worldly pleasures. It should not happen that a handful of rich people should live in jewelled palaces and the millions in miserable hovels devoid of sunlight or

ventilation. In non-violent Swaraj there can be no encroachment upon just rights; contrariwise no one can possess unjust rights. In a well-organized State, usurpation should be an impossibility and it should be unnecessary to resort to force for dispossessing an usurper.

Harijan, 25-3-1939, p. 65

No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortunately, Western Socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines. I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means is non-violent non-co-operation. At times, non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrong doers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own?

But it must be realized that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and the have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be educated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e. self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.

Harijan, 20-4-1940, p. 97

In order to reach this state we may not look on things philosophically and say that we need not make a move until all are converted to socialism. Without changing our life we may go on giving addresses, forming parties and hawk-like seize the game when it comes our way. This is no socialism. The more we treat it as game to be seized, the farther it must recede from us.

Socialism begins with the first convert. If there is one such, you can add zeros to the one and the first zero will account for ten and every addition will account for ten times the previous numer. If, however, the beginner is a zero, in other words, no one makes the beginning, multiplicity of zeros will also produce

zero value. Time and paper occupied in writing zeros will be so much waste.

This socialism is as pure as crystal. It, therefore, requires crystal-like means to achieve it. Impure means result in an impure end. Hence the prince and the peasant will not be equalized by cutting off the prince's head, nor can the process of cutting off equalize the employer and the employed. One cannot reach truth by untruthfulness. Truthful conduct alone can reach truth. Are not non-violence and truth twins? The answer is an emphatic 'no'. Non-violence is embedded in truth and *vice versa*. Hence has it been said that they are faces of the same coin. Either is inseparable from the other. Read the coin either way. The spelling of words will be different. The value is the same. This blessed state is unattainable without perfect purity. Harbour impurity of mind or body and you have untruth and violence in you.

Therefore, only truthful, non-violent and pure-hearted socialists will be able to establish a socialistic society in India and the world. To my knowledge there is no country in the world which is purely socialist. Without the means described above the existence of such a society is impossible.

Harijan, 13-7-1947, p. 232

CHAPTER 4

DEMOCRACY WITHOUT GOVERNMENT

"Can non-violence be used in politics?" Gandhiji was once asked.

"It can be used in politics," he answered, "precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it, but we definitely discard the use of violence, and grow from failure to success."

"You would govern non-violently. But all legislation is violence."

"No, not all legislation. Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."

"Do you think it is a realizable ideal?"

"Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence. The European democracies are to my mind a negation of democracy."

"Do you think that non-violence of the democracy which you visualize was ever realized in the olden times?"

"I do not know. But if it was not, it only means that we had never made the attempt to realize the highest in us. I have no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser, and that we have to grow wiser than we are today in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature. Perfect non-violence is

impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives."

Harijan, 21-7-1940, p. 211

There remains the question as to whether in an ideal society, there should be any or no government. I do not think, we need worry ourselves about this at the moment. If we continue to work for such a society, it will slowly come into being to an extent, such that the people can benefit by it. Euclid's line is one without breadth but no one has so far been able to draw it and never will. All the same it is only by keeping the ideal line in mind that we have made progress in geometry. What is true here is true of every ideal.

It must be remembered that nowhere in the world, does a State without government exist. If at all it could ever come into being, it would be in India; for, ours is the only country where the attempt has, at any rate, been made. We have not yet been able to show that bravery to the degree which is necessary and for the attainment of which there is only one way. Those who have faith in the latter, have to demonstrate it. In order to do so, the fear of death has to be completely shed, just as we have shed the fear of prisons.

Harijan, 15-9-1946, p. 309

I blieve that in the history of the world, there has not been a more genuinely democratic struggle for freedom than ours. I read Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* while I was in prison, and Pandit Jawaharlal has told me something about the Russian

revolution. But it is my conviction that inasmuch as these struggles were fought with the weapon of violence, they failed to realize the democratic ideal. In the democracy which I have envisaged, a democracy established by non-violence, there will be equal freedom for all. Everybody will be his own master.

Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44, pp. 173-74, (Edn. 1945)

CHAPTER 5

DEMOCRACY AND FOREIGN AGGRESSION

I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis, if the vast majority of the people are non-violent. So far as I know, India is the only country which has a possibility of being such a State. I am conducting my experiment in that faith. Supposing, therefore, that India attained independence through pure non-violence, India could retain it too by the same means. A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State will let him in, but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves

unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery. Practically speaking, there will be probably no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance was offered; there will be no expenditure in armaments and fortifications. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height. Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case the bravery consists in dying, not in killing.

Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group or nation. Indeed the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on, from which fact I infer that it is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and only law of life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported

it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

Harijan, 13-4-1940, p. 90

CHAPTER 6
DEMOCRACIES AND PACIFISTS

The pacifists may not do anything to weaken their own governments so as to compel defeat. But for fear of so doing they may not miss the only effective chance they have of demonstrating their undying faith in the futility of all war. If their own governments go mad and make martyrs of war-resisters, they (the governments) must suffer the consequence of the unrest of their own creation. The democracies must respect the liberty of individual non-violent conscience, however inconvenient it may be. This means that they put their conscience, and truth before their countries' so-called interest. For, regard for one's conscience, if it is really such, has never yet injured any legitimate cause or interest.

Therefore, it comes to this that a pacifist must resist when he feels strongly that, whether the so-called democracies live or die, the tug-of-war will never end war and that it will only end when at the crucial moment a body of pacifists have at any cost testified their living faith by suffering, if need be, the extreme penalty. I know the point for me to consider is not how to avoid the extreme penalty but how to behave so as to achieve the object in view. Where the very disturbing but potent factor of faith

is part of one's conduct, human calculations are of no avail. A true pacifist is a true Satyagrahi. The latter acts by faith and, therefore, is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true.

After all, what is the gain if the so-called democracies win? War certainly will not end. The democracies will have adopted all the tactics of the Fascists and Nazis, including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience. All that may be gained at the end of the victory is the possibility of comparative protection of individual liberty. But that protection does not depend upon outside help. It comes from the internal determination to protect it against the whole world. In other words, the true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and therefore his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind. In the coming test pacifists have to prove their faith by resolutely refusing to do anything with war whether of defence or offence. But the duty of resistance accrues only to those who believe in non-violence as a creed—not to those who will calculate and will examine the merits of each case and decide whether to approve of or oppose a particular war. It follows that such resistance is a matter for each person to decide for himself and under the guidance of the inner voice, if he recognizes its existence.

Harijan, 15-4-1939, pp. 89-90

CHAPTER 7

DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY

Q.: How will you run your administration non-violently?

A.: If you assume that we would have won independence by non-violent means, it means that the bulk of the country had been organized non-violently. Without the vast majority of people having become non-violent, we could not attain non-violent Swaraj. If, therefore, we attain Swaraj by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The *goondas* too will then have come under our control. If, for instance, in Sevagram we have five or seven *goondas* in a population of seven hundred who are non-violently organized, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village.

But you will see that I am answering the question with the utmost caution, and my truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force. But the police will be after our pattern, and not the British pattern. As we shall have adult suffrage, the voice of even the youngst of us will count. That is why I have said that the ideally non-violent State will be an ordered anarchy. That State will be the best governed which is governed the least. The pity is that no one trusts me with the reins of government! Otherwise I would show how to govern non-violently. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers.

* * *

Q.: But we cannot visualize how you will stand non-violently against a foreign invasion.

A.: I cannot draw the whole picture to you because we have no past experience to fall back upon and there is no reality facing us today. We have got the government army manned by the Sikhs, Pathans and Gurkhas. What I can conceive is this that with my non-violent army of, say, two thousand people I should put myself between the two contending armies. But this, I know, is no answer. I can only say that we shall be able to reduce the invader's violence to a minimum. The general of a non-violent army has got to have greater presence of mind than that of a violent army, and God would bless him with the necessary resourcefulness to meet situations as they arise.

Harijan, 25-8-1940, pp. 261-62

It will be a poor democracy that depends for its existence on military assistance. Military force interferes with the free growth of the mind. It smothers the soul of man. Thanks to years of foreign domination brought about by the "highly efficient" army, India... might have to pull through a long or short civil war which, I shall hope, will bring to an end all infatuation for armed forces. They are a brutalizing process after you have isolated discipline which should be common for any social order. If Free India has to sustain the present military expenditure, it will bring no relief to the famishing millions.

Harijan, 9-6-1946 p. 169

The Police

...I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit,

is a sign of my imperfect Ahimsa. I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army. Of course I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present-day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever-decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances.

Harijan, 1-9-1940, p. 265

CHAPTER 8

POWER : ITS USE AND ABUSE

Possession of power makes men blind and deaf, they cannot see things which are under their very nose and cannot hear things which invade their ears. There is thus no knowing what this power-intoxicated government may not do. So it seems to me that patriotic men ought to be prepared for death, imprisonment and similar eventualities.

Young India, 13-10-1921, p. 327

Power that comes from service faithfully rendered ennobles. Power that is sought in the name of service and can only be obtained by a majority of votes is a delusion and a snare to be avoided.

Young India, 11-9-1924, p. 301

Power is of two kinds. One is obtained by the fear of punishment and the other by arts of love. Power based on love is a thousand times more effective and permanent than the one derived from fear of punishment.

Young India, 8-1-1925, p. 15

Democracy is an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into mobocracy. Even a pariah, a labourer, who makes it possible for you to earn your living, will have his share in self-government. But you will have to touch their lives, go to them, see their hovels where they live packed like sardines. It is up to you to look after this part of humanity. It is possible for you to make their lives or mar their lives.

Young India, 1-12-1927, p. 404

To me political power is not an end but one of the means of enabling people to better their condition in every department of life. Political power means capacity to regulate national life through national representatives. If national life becomes so perfect as to become self-regulated, no representation is necessary. There is then a state of enlightened anarchy. In such a state everyone is his own ruler. He rules himself in such a manner that he is never a hindrance to his neighbour. In the ideal state threfore, there is no political power because there is no State. But the ideal is never fully realized in life. Hence the classical statement of Thoreau that that government is the best which governs the least.

Young India, 2-7-1931, p. 162

This means that when people come into possession of political power, the interference with the freedom of people is reduced to a minimum. In other words, a nation that runs its affairs smoothly and effectively without much State interference is truly democratic. Where such a condition is absent, the form of government is democratic in name.

Harijan, 11-1-1936, p. 382

I look upon an increase in the power of the State with the greatest fear, because, although while apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm by destroying individuality which lies at the root of all progress.

It is my firm conviction that if the State suppressed capitalism by violence, it will be caught in the coils of violence itself and fail to develop non-violence at any time.

The State represents violence in a concentrated and organized form. The individual has a soul, but as the State is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence. Hence I prefer the doctrine of trusteeship.

What I would personally prefer, would be, not a centralization of power in the hands of the State, but an extension of the sense of trusteeship; as in my opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. However, if it is unavoidable, I would support a minimum of State-ownership.

What I disapprove of is an organization based on force which a State is. Voluntary organization there must be.

The Modern Review, October, 1935, p. 412

Whilst power, superimposed, always needs the help of police and military, power generated from within should have little or no use for them.

Harijan, 4-9-1937, p. 233

CHAPTER 9

INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM IN DEMOCRACY

The truest test of democracy is in the ability of anyone to act as he likes, so long as he does not injure the life or property of anyone else. It is impossible to control public morals by hooliganism. Public opinion alone can keep a society pure and healthy.

Young India, 1-12-1920, p. 4

Whether we are one or many, we must refuse to purchase freedom at the cost of our self-respect or our

cherished convictions. I have known even little children become unbending when an attempt has been made to cross their declared purpose, be it ever so flimsy in the estimation of their parents.

Young India, 16-12-1921, p. 418

A nation cannot advance, without the units of which it is composed advancing, and conversely no individual can advance, without the nation of which he is a part also advancing.

Young India, 26-3-1931, p. 50

Most people do not understand the complicated machinery of the government. They do not realize that every citizen silently but none the less certainly sustains the government of the day in ways of which he has no knowledge. Every citizen, therefore, renders himself responsible for every act of his government. And it is quite proper to support it so long as the actions of the government are bearable. But when they hurt him and his nation, it becomes his duty to withdraw his support.

Young India, 28-7-1920, p. 4

It is true that in the vast majority of cases, it is the duty of a subject to submit to wrongs on failure of the usual procedure, so long as they do not affect his vital being. But every nation and every individual have the right, and it is their duty, to rise against an intolerable wrong. I do not believe in armed risings. They are a remedy worse than the disease sought to be cured. They are a token of the spirit of revenge and impatience and anger. The method of violence cannot do good in the long run. Witness the effect of the armed rising of the Allied Powers against Germany. Have they not

become even like the Germans, as the latter have been depicted to us by them?

Young India, 9-6-1920, p. 3

If the individual ceases to count, what is left of society? Individual freedom alone can make a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. If it is wrested from him, he becomes an automaton and society is ruined. No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man. Just as a man will not grow horns or a tail, so he will not exist as man if he has no mind of his own. In reality even those who do not believe in the liberty of the individual believe in their own. Modern editions of Chenghiz Khan retain their own.

Harijan, 1-2-1942, p. 27

In a democracy the individual will is governed and limited by the social will which is the State, which is governed by and for democracy. If every individual takes the law into his own hands there is no State, it becomes anarchy, i.e. absence of social law or State. That way lies destruction of liberty. Therefore, they should subdue their anger and let the State secure justice.

Delhi Diary, p. 18 (Edn. 1948)

I would be deeply distressed, if on every conceivable occasion every one of us were to be a law unto oneself and to scrutinize in golden scales every action of our future National Assembly. I would surrender my judgment in most matters to national representatives, taking particular care in making my choice of such representatives. I know that in no other

manner would a democratic government be possible for one single day.

Young India, 17-11-1921, p. 367

I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member.

Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 144

Individual liberty and inter-dependence are both essential for life in society. Only a Robinson Crusoe can afford to be all self-sufficient. When a man has done all he can for the satisfaction of his essential requirements he will seek the co-operation of his neighbours for the rest. That will be true co-operation.

Harijan, 31-3-1946, p. 59

CHAPTER 10

FREEDOM OF OPINION

Public opinion alone can keep a society pure and healthy.

Young India, 1-12-1920, p. 4

If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's own cause.

Young India, 2-2-1921, p. 33

Liberty of speech means that it is unassailed, even when the speech hurts; liberty of the Press can be said to be truly respected only when the Press can comment in the severest terms upon and even misrepresent matters, protection against misrepresentation or violence being secured not by an administrative gagging order, not by closing down the Press but by punishing the real offender, leaving the Press itself unrestricted. Freedom of associotion is truly respected when assemblies of people can discuss even revolutionary projects, the State relying upon the force of public opinion and the civil police, not the savage military at its disposal, to crush any actual outbreak of revolution that is designed to confound public opinion and the State representing it.

Young India, 12-1-1922, p. 29

I have repeatedly observed that no school of thought can claim a monopoly of right judgment. We are all liable to err and are often obliged to revise our judgments. In a vast country like this, there must be room for all schools of honest thought. And the

least, therefore, that we own to ourselves as to others is to try to understand the opponents' viewpoint and, if we cannot accept it, respect it as fully as we would expect him to respect ours. It is one of the indispensable tests of a healthy public life and, therefore, fitness for Swaraj. If we have no charity, and no tolerance, we shall never settle our differences amicably and must therefore always submit to the arbitrament of a third party, i.e. to foreign domination.

Young India, 17-4-1924, p. 130

Healthy public opinion has an influence of which we have not realized the full significance.... Public opinion becomes intolerable when it becomes violent and aggressive.

Young India, 7-5-1931, p. 103

A popular State can never act in advance of public opinion. If it goes against it, it will be destroyed. Democracy disciplined and enlightened is the finest thing in the world. A democracy prejudiced, ignorant, superstitious, will land itself in chaos and may be self-destroyed.

Harijan, 30-7-1931, p. 199

Evolution of democracy is not possible if we are not prepared to hear the other side. We shut the doors of reason when we refuse to listen to our opponents, or having listened, make fun of them. If intolerance becomes a habit, we run the risk of missing the truth. Whilst, with the limits that nature has put upon our understanding, we must act fearlessly according to the light vouchsafed to us, we must always keep an open mind and be ever ready to find that what we believed to be truth was, after all,

untruth. This openness of mind strengthens the truth in us and removes the dross from it, if there is any.

Harijan, 31-5-1942, p. 172

There is nothing more demoralizing than fake non-violence of the weak and impotent. If we had the requisite non-violence in us, our public life would be characterized by utmost toleration. There will then be room for as many parties as there are opinions. Differences of opinion would be an indication of healthy independence of mind which is the law of life, not party intrigues and party strife. The latter are incompatible with independence.

Harijan, 6-10-1946, p. 338

Legislation in advance of public opinion, is often worse than useless. Non-co-operation is the quickest method of creating public opinion.

Young India, 29-6-1921, p. 208

Legislation in a free State always represents the will of the majority. All legislation in advance of general opinion argues bankruptcy of missionary effort. My reliance, therefore, always has been on missionary enterprise.

The Epic Fast, p. 166, (Edn. 1932)

CHAPTER 11

NECESSITY FOR DISCIPLINE

The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied; unbridled licence is a sign of vulgarity, injurious alike to self and one's neighbours.

Young India, 3-6-1926, p. 203

A born democrat is a born disciplinarian. Democracy comes naturally to him who is habituated normally to yield willing obedience to all laws, human or divine....Let those who are ambitious to serve democracy qualify themselves by satisfying first this acid test of democracy. Moreover, a democrat must be utterly selfless. He must think and dream not in terms of self or party but only of democracy. Only then does he acquire the right of civil disobedience. I do not want anybody to give up his convictions or to suppress himself. I do not believe that a healthy and honest difference of opinion will injure our cause. But opportunism, camouflage or patched up compromises certainly will. If you must dissent, you should take care that your opinions voice your innermost convictions and are not intended merely as a convenient party cry.

Today our democracy is choked by our internecine strife. We are torn by dissensions—dissensions between Hindus and Musalmans, Brahmanas and non-Brahmanas, Congressmen and Congressmen. It is no easy task to evolve democracy out of this mobocracy. Let us

not make confusions worse confounded by further introducing into it the virus of sectionalism and party spirit.

Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 136

No organization can be run with success if its members, especially its officers, refuse to carry out its policy and hold on to it in spite of opposition to it.

Young India, 28-8-1924, p. 285

Freedom of four hundred million people through purely non-violent effort is not to be gained without learning the virtue of iron discipline not imposed from without but sprung naturally from within. Without the requisite discipline non-violence can only be a veneer.

The Hindustan Standard, 6-8-1944

CHAPTER 12

MEANS AND ENDS

That there is no connection between the means and the end is a great mistake. Through that mistake even men who have been considered religious have committed grievous crimes....The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

Hind Swaraj, p. 71, (Edn. 1958)

They say, 'means are after all means.' I would say, 'means are after all everything.' As the means so the end. There is no wall of separation between the means and the end. Indeed the Creator has given

us control (and that too very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.

Young India, 17-7-1924, p. 236

I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes.... Experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence.

Young India, 11-12-1924, p. 406

Means to be means must always be within our reach.... If we take care of the means, we are bound to reach the end sooner or later.

From Yeravda Mandir, p. 9, (Edn. 1945)

The clearest possible definition of the goal and its appreciation would fail to take us there if we do not know and utilize the means of achieving it. I have, therefore, concerned myself principally with the conservation of the means and their progressive use. I know that if we can take care of them, attainment of the goal is assured. I feel, too, that our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means.... This method may appear to be long, perhaps too long, but I am convinced that it is the shortest.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 17-9-1933

CHAPTER 13

RIGHTS AND DUTIES IN DEMOCRACY

The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek. If leaving duties unperformed we run after rights, they escape us like a will-o'-the-wisp. The more we pursue them, the farther they fly. The same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words: 'Action alone is thine. Leave thou the fruit severely alone.' Action is duty; fruit is the right.

Young India, 8-1-1925, pp. 15-16

No people have risen who thought only of rights. Only those did so who thought of duties. Out of the performance of duties flow rights, and those that knew and performed their duties came naturally by the rights. The Shastras inculcate reverence to parents. It means implicit obedience to them, and why do we willingly obey like that? We know that an angry look from his mother was sufficient to make the giant-like Shaukat Ali cower before her. What is the secret of this willing obedience? It is that obedience carries with it enjoyment of a right—the right to inheritance. At the back of obedience is a consciousness of a right to be enjoyed, and yet woe to the man who obeys with an eye to the right to inheritance. It is the Shastras again that inculcate obedience without an eye to the fruit thereof. He who thinks not of the right gets it, and he who thinks of it loses it. That is the rule of conduct which I would like to place before you.

Young India, 15-1-1925, p. 18

Every man has an equal right to the necessaries of life even as birds and beasts have. And since every right carries with it a corresponding duty and the corresponding remedy for resisting any attack upon it, it is merely a matter of finding out the corresponding duties and remedies to vindicate the elementary fundamental equality. The corresponding duty is to labour with my limbs and the corresponding remedy is to non-co-operate with him who deprives me of the fruit of my labour.

Young India, 26-3-1931, p. 49

In Swaraj based on Ahimsa people need not know their rights, but it is necessary for them to know their duties. There is no duty but creates a corresponding right, and those only are true rights which flow from a due performance of one's duties. Hence rights of true citizenship accrue only to those who serve the State to which they belong. And they alone can do justice to the rights that accrue to them. Everyone possesses the right to tell lies or resort to *goondaism*. But the exercise of such a right is harmful both to the exerciser and society. But to him who observes truth and non-violence comes prestige, and prestige brings rights. And people who obtain rights as a result of performance of duty, exercise them only for the service of society, never for themselves. Swaraj of a people means the sum total of the Swaraj (self-rule) of individuals. And such Swaraj comes only from performance by individuals of their duty as citizens. In it no one thinks of his rights. They come, when they are needed, for better performance of duty.

Harijan, 25-3-1939, p. 64

Service of the family has been the motive behind all our activities hitherto. We must now learn to broaden our outlook so as to include in our ambit the service of the people as a whole.

We are familiar with several conceptions of village work. Hitherto it has mostly meant propaganda in the villages to inculcate upon the village masses a sense of their rights. Sometimes it has also meant conducting welfare activity among them to ameliorate their material condition. But the village work that I have now come to place before you consists in educating the villager in his duties.

Rights accrue automatically to him who duly performs his duties. In fact the right to perform one's duties is the only right that is worth living for and dying for. It covers all legitimate rights. All the rest is grab under one guise or another and contains in it seeds of *himsa*.

Harijan, 27-5-1939, p. 143

All rights to be deserved and preserved come from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of citizenship of the world. From this very fundamental statement perhaps it is easy enough to define the duties of man and woman and correlate every right to some corresponding duty to be first performed. Every other right can be shown to be a usurpation hardly worth fighting for.

Harijan, 8-6-1947, p. 184

If instead of insisting on rights everyone did his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. There is no such thing as the divine right of kings to rule and the humble duty of the *ryots* to pay respectful obedience to their

masters. Whilst it is true that these hereditary inequalities must go as being injurious to the well-being of society, the unabashed assertion of rights of the hitherto downtrodden millions is equally injurious, if not more so to the same well-being. The latter behaviour is probably calculated to injure the millions rather than the few claimants of divine or other rights. They could but die a brave or coward death, but those few dead would not bring in the orderly life of blissful contentment.

It is, therefore, necessary to understand the correlation of rights and duties. I venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations sooner discarded the better.... Force that performance of duty naturally generates is the non-violent and invincible force that Satyagraha brings into being.

Harijan, 6-7-1947, p. 217

CHAPTER 14

PARTIES IN DEMOCRACY

Q.: It has been our experience that a worker becomes power-loving after some time. How are the rest of his co-workers to keep him in check? In other words, how are we to preserve the democratic character of the organization? We have found that non-co-operation with the party in question does not help. The work of the organization itself suffers.

A.: This is not your experience alone but it is almost universal. Love of power is usual in man and

it often only dies with his death. Therefore, it is difficult for co-workers to keep him in check, if only because they are more likely than not to have the same human frailty; and so long as we do not know a single completely non-violent organization in the world, we cannot claim to know the utterly democratic character of an organization because, as can be definitely proved, no perfect democracy is possible without perfect non-violence at the back of it. The question would be proper if non-co-operation was violent as it often, if not invariably, is. Claiming to know somewhat from experience the non-violent character of non-co-operation, I suggest that given a good cause, non-violent non-co-operation must succeed, and no organization can suffer through offering non-violent non-co-operation. The questioner labours under the difficulty of having experience of non-co-operation, at best partially non-violent, at its worst bare-faced violence sailing under the name of non-violence. The pages of the *Harijan* and *Young India* are filled with instances of abortive non-co-operation, because of these two vital defects, non-violence being partial or totally absent. During my long experience, I also noticed that those who complain of others of being ambitious of holding power are no less ambitions themselves, and when it is a question of distinguishing between half a dozen and six, it becomes a thankless task.

Q.: In almost all villages there are parties and factions. When we draft local help, whether we wish it or not, we become involred in local power politics. How can we steer clear of this difficulty? Should we try to by-pass both parties and carry on work with the help of outside workers? Our experience has been that such work becomes entirely contingent upon

outside aid and crumbles down as soon as the latter is withdrawn. What should we do then to develop local initiative and foster local co-operation?

A.: Alas for India that parties and factions are to be found in the villages as they are to be found in our cities. And when power politics enter our villages with less thought of the welfare of the villages and more of using them for increasing the parties' own power, this becomes a hindrance to the progress of the villagers rather than a help. I would say that whatever be the consequence, we must make use as much as possible of local help and if we are free from the taint of power politics, we are not likely to go wrong. Let us remember that the English-educated men and women from the cities have criminally neglected the villages of India which are the backbone of the country. The process of remembering our neglect will induce patience. I have never gone to a single village which is devoid of an honest worker. We fail to find him when we are not humble enough to recognize any merit in our villages. Of course, we are to steer clear of local politics, and this we shall learn to do when we accept help from all parties and no parties, wherever it is really good. I would regard it as fatal for success to by-pass viilagers. As I knew this very difficulty, I have tried rigidly to observe the rule of one village, one worker, except that where he or she does not know Bengali, an interpreter's help has been given. I can only say that this system has so far answered the purpose. I must, therefore, discount your experience. I would further suggest that we have got into the vicious habit of coming to hasty conclusions. Before pronouncing such a sweeping condemnation as is implied in the sentence that 'work

becomes entirely contingent upon outside aid and crumbles down as soon as the latter is withdrawn', I would go so far as to say that even a few years' experience of residence in a single village, trying to work through local workers, should not be regarded as conclusive proof that work could not be done through and by local workers. The contrary is obviously true. It now becomes unnecessary for me to examine the last sentence in detail. I can categorically say to the principal worker: 'If you have any outside help, get rid of it. Work singly, courageously, intelligently with all the local help you can get and, if you do not succeed, blame only yourself and no one else and nothing else.'

Harijan, 2-3-1947, p. 44

Law of Majority

In matters of conscience, the Law of Majority has no place.

Young India, 4-8-1920, p. 3

Let us not push the mandate theory to ridiculous extremes and become slaves to resolutions of majorities. That would be a revival of brute force in a more virulent form. If rights of minorities are to be respected, the majority must tolerate and respect their opinion and action....It will be the duty of the majority to see to it that minorities receive a proper hearing and are not otherwise exposed to insults. Swaraj will be an absurdity if individuals have to surrender their judgement to the majority.

Young India, 8-12-1921, p. 403

The rule of majority has a narrow application, i.e. one should yield to the majority in matters of

detail. But it is slavery to be amenable to the majority, no matter what its decisions are....Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy, individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded. I, therefore, believe that the minority has a perfect right to act differently from the majority.

Young India, 2-3-1922, p. 129

Claiming the right of free opinion and free action as we do, we must extend the same to others. The rule of majority, when it becomes coercive, is as intolerable as that of a bureaucratic minority. We must patiently try to bring round the minority to our view by gentle persuasion and argument. Having been trained only to do things by order and under fear of punishment, we are likely, in the consciousness of strength, we are daily acquiring, to repeat the mistakes of the rulers in an exaggerated form in our relations with those, who may happen to be weaker than we are. That will be a worse state than the first.

Young India, 26-1-1922, p. 54

I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity. In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like there is not only no safety in numbers but there may be even danger in them. Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull.

Young India, 30-4-1925, p. 152

I ask you not to be cowed down by the thought of a small minority. It is sometimes a privilege. I have so often said that I would love to be in the minority

of one, because this artificial majority, which is the result of the masses' reverence for me, is a clog in my progress. But for the clog, I would hurl defiance today.

Young India, 13-8-1925, p. 279

I would only ask a candidate, 'How much of a man or woman you are? Have you got the ability to rise to the occasion?' Provided he or she passes these tests, I would select first the one who belongs to the least numerical section. I would thus give preference to all minorities along just lines, consistent with the welfare of India as whole, not of Hindus and Musalmans or of a particular community.

Young India, 13-8-1925, p. 278

My implicit faith in non-violence does mean yielding to minorities when they are really weak. The best way to weaken communalists is to yield to them. Resistance will only rouse their suspicion and strengthen their opposition.

Young India, 2-7-1931, p. 162

CHAPTER 15

SATYAGRAHA IN DEMOCRACY

When I began to preach Satyagraha and civil disobedience it was never meant to cover criminal disobedience. My experience teaches me that truth can never be propagated by doing violence. Those who believe in the justice of their cause have need to possess boundless patience, and those alone are fit to offer civil disobedience who are above committing criminal disobedience or doing violence. A man cannot commit both civil and criminal disobedience at the

same time even as he cannot be both temperate and furious at the same time, and just as self-restraint is acquired only after one has been able to master his passions, so is the capacity for civil disobedience acquired after one has disciplined oneself in complete and voluntary obedience of the laws of the land. Again, just as he alone can be said to be proof against temptation who, having been exposed to them, has succeeded in resisting them, so may we be said to have conquered anger when having sufficient cause for it we have succeeded in controlling ourselves.

Young India, 28-4-1920, p. 8

I hold the opinion firmly that civil disobedience is the purest type of constitutional agitation. Of course, it becomes degrading and despicable, if its civil, i.e. non-violent character, is a mere camouflage.

Young India, 15-12-1921, p. 419

Disobedience to be civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well-understood principle, must not be capricious and above all, must have no ill-will or hatred behind it.

Young India, 24-3-1920, p. 4

Those only can take up civil disobedience, who believe in willing obedience even to irksome laws imposed by the State so long as they do not hurt their conscience or religion, and are prepared equally willingly to suffer the penalty of civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be absolutely non-violent, the underlying principle being the winning over of the opponent by suffering, i.e. love.

Young India, 3-11-1921, p. 346-47

This I do say, fearlessly and firmly, that every worthy object can be achieved by the use of Satyagraha.

It is the highest and infallible means, the greatest force. Socialism will not be reached by any other means. Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.

Harijan, 20-7-1947, p. 240

I wish I could persuade everybody that civil disobedience is the inherent right of a citizen. He dare not give it up without ceasing to be a man. Civil disobedience is never followed by anarchy. Criminal disobedience can lead to it. Every State puts down criminal disobedience by force. It perishes, if it does not. But to put down civil disobedience is to attempt to imprison conscience.

Young India, 5-1-1922, p. 5

We must not resort to non-payment because of the possibility of a ready response. The readiness is a fatal temptation. Such non-payment will not be civil or non-violent but it will be criminal or fraught with the greatest possibility of violence. Not until the peasantry is trained to understand the reason and the virtue of civil non-payment and is prepared to look with calm resignation upon the confiscation (which can only be temporary) of their holdings and the forced sale of their cattle and other belongings, may they be advised to withhold payment of taxes.

Young India, 26-1-1922, p. 57

It is not *any* imprisonment that will lead to Swaraj. It is not *every* disobedience that will fire us with the spirit of obedience and discipline. Jails are no gateway to liberty for the confirmed criminal. They are temples of liberty only for those who are innocence personified. The execution of Socrates made immortality a living

reality for us, — not so the execution of countless murderers. There is no warrant for supposing that we can steal Swaraj by the imprisonment of thousands of nominally non-violent men with hatred, ill-will, and violence raging in their breasts.

Young India, 2-3-1922, p. 135

Since Satyagraha is one of the most powerful method of direct action, a Satyagrahi exhausts all other means before he resorts to Satyagraha. He will therefore constantly and continually approach the constituted authority, he will appeal to public opinion, educate public opinion, state his case calmly and coolly before everybody, who wishes to listen to him, and only after he has exhausted all these avenues will he resort to Satyagraha. But when he has found the impelling call of the inner voice within him and launches out on Satyagraha he has burnt his boats and there is no receding.

Young India, 20-10-1927, p. 353

Discipline has a place in non-violent strategy, but much more is required. In a Satyagraha army everybody is a soldier and a servant. But at a pinch every Satyagrahi soldier has also to be his own general and leader. Mere discipline cannot make for leadership. The latter calls for faith and vision.

Harijan, 28-7-1940, p. 227

I have said times without number that Satyagraha admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism; and still in the name of Satyagraha we have burnt buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private houses. If

deeds such as these could save me from the prison-house or the scaffold, I should not like to be so saved.

Speeches and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi, p. 476

Indiscriminate resistance to authority must lead to lawlessness, unbridled licence and consequent self-destruction.

Young India, 2-4-1931, p. 58

The first indispensable condition precedent to any civil resistance is that there should be surety against any outbreak of violence whether on the part of those who are identified with civil resistance or on the part of the general public. It would be no answer in the case of an outbreak of violence that it was instigated by the State or other agencies hostile to civil resisters. It should be obvious that civil resistance cannot flourish in an atmosphere of violence. This does not mean that the resources of a Satyagrahi have come to an end. Ways other than civil disobedience should be found out.

Harijan, 18-3-1939, p. 53

Civil disobedience and non-co-operation are designed for use when people... have no political power. But immediately they have political power, naturally their grievances, whatever their character, will be ameliorated through legislative channels.

Amrita Bazar Patrika, 15-1-1945

People in a democracy should be satisfied with drawing the government's attention to mistakes, if any. They could remove the Government if they wished to. But they should not obstruct them by agitating against them. Ours is not a foreign government having a mighty army and navy to support

them. They have to derive their strength from the people.

Delhi Diary, p. 86, (Edn. 1948)

Complete civil disobedience is rebellion without the element of violence in it. An out-and-out civil resister simply ignores the authority of the State. He becomes an outlaw claiming to disregard every unmoral State law. Thus, for instance, he may refuse to pay taxes, he may refuse to recognize the authority of the State in his daily intercourse. He may refuse to obey the law of trespass and claim to enter military barracks in order to speak to the soldiers, he may refuse to submit to limitations upon the manner of picketing and may picket within the prescribed area. In doing all this he never uses force and never resists force when it is used against him. In fact, he invites imprisonment and other uses of force against himself. This he does because and when he finds the bodily freedom he seemingly enjoys to be an intolerable burden. He argues to himself, that a State allows personal freedom only in so far as the citizen submits to its regulations. Submission to the State law is the price a citizen pays for his personal liberty. Submission, therefore, to a State wholly or largely unjust is an immoral barter for liberty. A citizen who thus realizes the evil nature of a State is not satisfied to live on its sufferance, and therefore appears to the others who do not share his belief to be a nuisance to society whilst he is endeavouring to compel the State, without committing a moral breach, to arrest him. Thus considered, civil resistance is a most powerful expression of a soul's anguish and an eloquent protest against the continuance of an evil State. Is not this the

history of all reform? Have not reformers, much to the disgust of their fellows, discarded even innocent symbols associated with an evil practice?

When a body of men disown the State under which they have hitherto lived, they nearly establish their own government. I say nearly, for they do not go to the point of using force when they are resisted by the State. Their 'business', as of the individual, is to be locked up or shot by the State, unless it recognizes their separate existence, in other words, bows to their will. Thus three thousand Indians in South Africa after due notice to the Government of the Transvaal crossed the Transvaal border in 1914 in defiance of the Transvaal Immigration Law and compelled the Government to arrest them. When it failed to provoke them to violence or to coerce them into submission, it yielded to their demand. A body of civil resisters is, therefore, like an army subject to all the discipline of a soldier, only harder because of want of excitement of an ordinary soldier's life. And as a civil resistance army is or ought to be free from passion because free from the spirit of retaliation, it requires the fewest number of soliers. Indeed one *perfect* civil resister is enough to win the battle of Right against Wrong.

Young India, 10-11-1921, pp. 361-62

CHAPTER 16

FASTING IN SATYAGRAHA

Fasting is a potent weapon in the Satyagraha armoury. It cannot be taken by every one. Mere physical capacity to take it is no qualification for it. It is of no use without a living faith in God. It should never be a mechanical effort nor a mere imitation. It must come from the depth of one's soul. It is, therefore, always rare.

Harijan, 18-3-1939, p. 56

There can be no room for selfishness, anger, lack of faith, or impatience in a pure fast. . . . Infinite patience, firm resolve, single-mindedness of purpose, perfect calm, and no anger must of necessity be there. But since it is impossible for a person to develop all these qualities all at once, no one who has not devoted himself to following the laws of Ahimsa should undertake a Satyagrahi fast.

Harijan, 13-10-1940, p. 322

One general principle, however, I would like to enunciate. A Satyagrahi should fast only as a last resort when all other avenues of redress have been explored and have failed. There is no room for imitation in fasts. He who has no inner strength should not dream of it, and never with attachment to success. . . . Ridiculous fasts spread like plague and are harmful.

Harijan, 21-4-1946, p. 93

Of course, it is not to be denied that fasts can be really coercive. Such are fasts to attain a selfish object.

A fast undertaken to wring money from a person or for fulfilling some such personal end would amount to the exercise of coercion or undue influence. I would unhesitatingly advocate resistance of such undue influence. I have myself successfully resisted it in the fasts that have been undertaken or threatened against me. And if it is argued that the dividing line between a selfish and unselfish end is often very thin, I would urge that a person who regards the end a fast to be selfish or otherwise base should resolutely refuse to yield to it, even though the refusal may result in the death of the fasting person.

If people will cultivate the habit of disregarding fasts which in their opinion are taken for unworthy ends, such fasts will be robbed of the taint of coercion and undue influence. Like all human institutions, fasting can be both legitimately and illegitimately used.

Harijan, 6-5-1933

If a man, however popular and great he may be, takes up an improper cause and fasts in defence of the impropriety, it is the duty of his friends....fellow workers and relatives to let him die rather than that an improper cause should triumph so that he may live. Fairest means cease to be fair when the end sought is unfair.

Harijan, 17-3-1946, p. 43

Duragrah

Some students have revived the ancient form of barbarity in the form of 'sitting *dharna*'. I call it 'barbarity' for it is a crude way of using coercion. It is also cowardly because one who sits '*dharna*' knows that he is not going to be trampled over. It is difficult

to call the practice violence, but it is certainly worse. If we fight our opponent, we at least enable him to return the blow. But when we challenge him to walk over us, we, *knowing* that he will not, place him in a most awkward and humiliating position. I know that the over-zealous students who sat *dharna* never thought of the barbarity of the deed. But one, who is expected to follow the voice of conscience and stand even single-handed in the face of odds, cannot afford to be thoughtless. ...There must be no impatience, no barbarity, no insolence, no undue pressure. If we want to cultivate a true spirit of democracy, we cannot afford to be intolerant. Intolerance betrays want of faith in one's own cause.

Young India, 2-2-1921, p. 33

CHAPTER 17

MOBOCRACY

Those who claim to lead the masses must resolutely refuse to be led by them, if we want to avoid mob law and desire ordered progress for the country. I believe that mere protestation of one's opinion and surrender to the mass opinion is not only not enough, but in matters of vital importance, leaders must *act* contrary to the mass of opinion if it does not commend itself to their reason.

Young India, 14-7-1920, p. 4

Personally I do not mind government fury as I mind mob fury. The latter is a sign of national distemper and therefore more difficult to deal with than the former which is confined to a small corporation. It is easier to oust a government that has rendered

itself unfit to govern than it is to cure unknown people in a mob of their madness.

Young India, 28-7-1920, p. 3

Nothing is so easy as to train mobs, for the simple reason that they have no mind, no premeditation. They act in a frenzy. They repent quickly. Non-co-operation I am therefore now using in order to evolve democracy.

Young India, 8-9-1920, p. 5

We must train these masses of men who have a heart of gold, who feel for the country, who want to be taught and led. But a few intelligent, sincere workers are needed, and the whole nation can be organized to act intelligently, and democracy can be evolved out of mobocracy.

Young India, 22-9-1920, p. 3

The spirit of democracy cannot be established in the midst of terrorism whether governmental or popular. In some respects popular terrorism is more antagonistic to the growth of the democratic spirit than the governmental. For the latter strengthens the spirit of democracy, whereas the former kills it.

Young India, 23-2-1921, p. 59

If I can have nothing to do with the organized violence of the government, I can have less to do with the unorganized violence of the people. I would prefer to be crushed between the two.

Young India, 24-11-1921, p. 382

The leaders of every clean movement are bound to see that they admit only clean fighters to it.

Satyagraha in South Africa, p. 218, (Edn. 1928)

CHAPTER 18

STRIKES IN DEMOCRACY

I know that strikes are an inherent right of the working-men for the purpose of securing justice, but they must be considered a crime immediately the capitalists accept the principle of arbitration.

Young India, 5-5-1920, p. 6

Strikes, cessation of work and *hartal* are wonderful things no doubt, but it is not difficult to abuse them. Workmen ought to organize themselves into strong labour unions, and on no account shall they strike work without the consent of these unions.

Young India, 11-2-1920, p. 8

Obviously there should be no strike which is not justifiable on merits. No unjust strike should succeed. All public sympathy must be withheld from such strikes. The public has no means of judging the merits of a strike, unless it is backed by impartial persons enjoying public confidence. Interested men cannot judge the merits of their own case. Hence, there must be an arbitration accepted by the parties or a judicial adjudication....

Strikes for economic betterment should never have a political end as an ulterior motive. Such a mixture never advances the political end and generally brings trouble upon strikers, even when they do not dislocate public life, as in the case of public utility services, such is the postal strike....

Such strikes can only take place when every other legitimate means has been adopted and failed.

Harijan, 11-8-1946, p. 256

Sympathetic strikes must be taboo until it is conclusively proved that the affected men have exhausted all the legitimate means at their disposal.

Harijan, 11-8-1946, p. 256

Political strikes must be treated on their own merits and must never be mixed with or related to economic strikes. Political strikes have a definite place in non-violent action. They are never taken up haphazard. They must be open, never led by *goondaism*. They are calculated never to lead to violence.

Harijan, 18-11-1926, p. 256

A strike should be spontaneous and not manipulated. If it is organized without any compulsion there would be no chance for *goondaism* and looting. Such a strike would be characterized by perfect co-operattion amongst the strikers. It should be peaceful and there should be no show of force.

Harijan, 2-6-1946, p. 158

A pacific strike must be limited to those who are labouring under the grievance to be redressed.

Young India, 18-11-1926, p. 400

In a well-ordered democratic society there is no room, no occasion for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there are ample lawful means for vindicating justice. Violence, veiled or unveiled, must be taboo. Strikes in Kanpur, coal mines or elsewhere mean material loss to the whole society not excluding the strikers themselves. I need not be reminded that this declamation does not lie well in the mouth of one like me who has been responsible for so many successful strikes. If there be such critics they ought

not to forget that then there was neither independence nor the kind of legislation we have now. I wonder if we can remain free from the fever of power politics or the bid for power which afflicts the political world, the East and the West.

From post-prayer speech at Birla House, New Delhin, on 26-1-1948

Harijan, 1-2-1948, p. 15

CHAPTER 19

EVILS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION

Every palace that one sees in India is a demonstration not of her riches but of the insolence of power that riches give to the few, who owe them to the miserably requited labours of the millions of the paupers of India.

Young India, 28-4-1927, p. 137

God forbid that India should ever take to industrialism after the manner of the West. The economic imperialism of a single tiny island kingdom (England) is today keeping the world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 millions took to similar economic exploitation, it would strip the world bare like locusts, Unless the capitalists of India help to avert that tragedy by becoming trustees of the welfare of the masses, and by devoting their talents not to amassing wealth for themselves but to the service of the masses in an altruistic spirit, they will end either by destroying the masses or being destroyed by them.

Young India, 20-12-1928, p. 422

The Western civilization is urban. Small countries like England or Italy may afford to urbanize

their systems. A big country like America with a very spars population, perhaps, cannot do otherwise. But one would think that a big country, with a teeming population with an ancient rural tradition which has hitherto answered its purpose, need not, must not copy the Western model. What is good for one nation situated in one condition is not necessarily good enough for another differently situated. One man's food is often another man's poison. Physical geography of a country has a predominant share in determining its culture. A fur coat may be a necessity for the dweller in the polar regions, it will smother those living in the equatorial regions.

Young India, 25-7-1929, p. 244

I do not believe that industrialization is necessary in any case for any country. It is much less so for India. Indeed, I believe that Independent India can only discharge her duty towards a groaning world by adopting a simple but ennobled life by developing her thousands of cottages and living at peace with the world. High thinking is inconsistent with complicated material life based on high speed imposed on us by Mammon worship. All the graces of life are possible only when we learn the art of living nobly.

Harijan, 1-9-1946, p. 285

Class Conflict not Inevitable

There is conflict of interest between capital and labour, but we have to resolve it by doing our own duty. Just as pure blood is proof against poisonous germs, so will labour, when it is pure, be proof against exploitation. The labourer has but to realize that labour is also capital. As soon as the labourers

are properly educated and organized and they realize their strength, no amount of capital can subdue them. Organized and enlightened labour can dictate its own terms. It is no use vowing vengeance against a party because we are weak. We have to get strong. Strong hearts, enlightened minds and willing hands can brave all odds and remove all obstacles. No, 'love thy neighbour as thyself' is no counsel of perfection. The capitalist is as much a neighbour of the labourer as the latter is a neighbour of the former, and one has to seek and win the willing co-operation of the other. Nor does the principle mean that we should accept exploitation lying down. Our internal strength will render all exploitation impossible.

Harijan, 1-3-1935, p. 23

I do not want to destroy the zamindar, but neither do I feel that the zamindar is inevitable.... I expect to convert the zamindars and other capitalists by the non-violent method, and therefore there is for me nothing like an inevitability of class conflict. For it is an essential part of non-violence to go along the line of least resistance. The moment the cultivators of the soil realize their power, the zamindari evil will be sterilized. What can the poor *zamindari* do when they say that they will simply not work the land unless they are paid enough to feed and clothe and educate themselves and their children in a decent manner? In reality the toiler is the owner of what he produces. If the toilers intelligently combine, they will become an irresistible power. That is how I do not see the necessity of class conflict. If I thought it inevitable, I should not hesitate to preach it and teach it.

Harijan, 5-12-1936, pp. 338-39

Without the necessary discipline in non-violence, they (the employees) would have internecine strife, and would never be ready to develop the strength that is needed to enable them to realize the power that they possess. Organization, technical skill, and everything else would follow the acceptance of the fundamental principle of non-violence. Class collaboration would also follow as a matter of course. They are strong in numbers and yet they feel so despondent, so very much at the mercy of their employers. That is because they do not know their own inherent strength. Otherwise what is there to prevent them from pooling their own resources and dictate terms as employers do now. The thing that they have to realize is that labour is as much capital as metal. That realization can come only through acceptance of non-violence.

But after that realization has come, and they have come to their own, non-violence does not become superfluous. If they were to bid goodbye to it, they would be as bad as capitalists and turn exploiters themselves. The realization of their strength combined with adherence to non-violence would enable them to co-operate with capital and turn it to proper use. Then they will not regard it as a conflicting interest, they will not regard the mill and the machinery as belonging to the exploiting agents and grinding them down, but as their own instruments of production, and will, therefore protect them as well as they would their own property. They will not steal time and turn out less work, but will put in the most they can. In fact, capital and labour will be mutual trustees, and both will be trustees of consumers. The trusteeship theory is not unilateral, and does not in the least

imply superiority of the trustee. It is, as I have shown, a perfectly mutual affair, and each believes that his own interest is best safeguarded by safeguarding the interest of the other. 'May you propitiate the gods and may the gods propitiate you, and may you reach the highest good by this mutual propitiation', says the Bhagawadgita. There is no separate species called gods in the universe, but all who have the power of production and will work for the community using that power, are gods — labourers no less than the capitalists.

Harijan, 25-6-1938, pp. 161-62

CHAPTER 20

PROBLEM OF ECONOMIC INEQUALITIES

I have no hesitation in endorsing the proposition that generally rich men and for that matter most men are not particular as to the way they make money. In the application of the method of non-violence, one must believe in the possibility of every person, however depraved, being reformed under humane and skilled treatment. We must appeal to the good in human beings and expect response. Is it not conducive to the well-being of society that every member uses all his talents, only not for personal aggrandizement but for the good of all? We do not want to produce a dead equality where every person becomes or is rendered incapable of using his ability to the utmost possible extent. Such a society must ultimately perish. I therefore suggest that my advice that moneyed men may earn their crores (honestly

only, of course) but so as to dedicate them to the service of all is perfectly sound. "तेन त्यक्तेन मुञ्जीथाः।" is a *mantra* based on uncommon knowledge. It is the surest method to evolve a new order of life of universal benefit in the place of the present one where each one lives for himself without regard to what happens to his neighbour.

Harijan, 1-2-1942, p. 20

It may be asked whether history at any time records such a change in human nature. Such changes have certainly taken place in individuals. One may not perhaps be able to point to them in a whole society. But this only means that up till now there has never been an experiment on a large scale in non-violence. Somehow or other the wrong belief has taken possession of us that Ahimsa is pre-eminently a weapon for individuals and its use should, therefore, be limited to that sphere. In fact this is not the case. Ahimsa is definitely an attribute of society. To convince people of this truth is at once my effort and my experiment. In this age of wonders no one will say that a thing or idea is worthless because it is new. To say it is impossible because it is difficult, is again not in consonance with he spirit of the age. Things undreamt of are daily being seen, the impossible is ever becoming possible. We are constantly being astonished these days at the amazing discoveries in the field of violence. But I maintain that far more undreamt of and seemingly impossible discoveries will be made in the field of non-violence. The history of religion is full of such examples. To try to root out religion itself from society is a wild-goose chase. And were such an attempt to succeed, it would mean the destruction of society. Superstition, evil customs and other imperfections

creep in from age to age and mar religion for the time being. They come and go. But religion itself remains, because the existence of the world in a broad sense depends on religion. The ultimate definition of religion may be said to be obedience to the law of God. God and His law are synonymous terms. Therefore God signifies an unchanging and living law. No one has ever really found Him. But *avatars* and prophets have, by means of their *tapasya*, given to mankind a faint glimpse of the eternal law.

If, however, in spite of the utmost effort the rich do not become guardians of the poor in the true sense of the term and the latter are more and more crushed and die of hunger, what is to be done? In trying to find the solution to this riddle I have linghted on non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience as the right and infallible means. The rich cannot accumulate wealth without the co-operation of the poor in society. Man has been conversant with violence from the beginning, for he has inherited this strength from the animal in his nature. It was only when he rose from the state of a quadruped (animal) to that of a biped (man) that the knowledge of the strength of Ahimsa entered into his soul. This knowledge has grown within him slowly but surely. If this knowledge were to penetrate to and spread amongst the poor, they would become strong and would learn how to free themselves by means of non-violence from the crushing inequalities which have brought them to the verge of starvation.

Harijan, 25-8-1940, p. 260-61

I cannot accept benevolent or any other dictatorship. Neither will the rich vanish nor will the poor be protected. Some rich men will certainly be killed

out and some poor men will be spoon-fed. As a class, the rich will remain, and the poor also, in spite of dictatorship labelled benevolent. The real remedy lies in non-violent democracy, otherwise spelt true education of all. The rich should be taught the doctrine on stewardship and the poor that of self-help.

Harijan, 8-6-1940, p. 159

Exploitation of the poor can be extinguished not by effecting the destruction of a few millionaires, but by removing the ignorance of the poor and teaching them to non-co-operate with their exploiters. That will convert the exploiters also. I have even suggested that ultimately it will lead to both being equal partners. Capital as such is not evil; it is its wrong use that is evil. Capital in some form or other will always be needed.

Harijan, 28-7-1940, p. 219

CHAPTER 21

CHOICE BEFORE CAPITALISTS

If Indian society is to make real progress along peaceful lines, there must be a definite recognition on the part of the moneyed class that a ryot possesses the same soul that they do and that their wealth gives them no superiority over the poor. They must regard themselves, even as the Japanese nobles did, as trustees holding their wealth for the good of their wards, the ryots. Then they would take no more than a reasonable amount as commission for their labours. At present there is no proportion between the wholly unnecessary pomp and extravagance of the moneyed class and the squalid surroundings and the grinding

pauperism of the ryots in whose midst the former are living....If only the capitalist class will read the signs of the times, revise their notions of God-given right to all they possess, in an incredibly short space of time the seven hundred thousand dung-heaps which today pass muster as villages can be turned into abodes of peace, health and comfort. I am convinced that the capitalist, if he follows the Samurai of Japan, has nothing really to lose and everything to gain. There is no other choice than between voluntary surrender on the part of the capitalist of superfluities and consequent acquisition of the real happiness of all on the one hand, and on the other, the impending chaos into which, if the capitalist does not wake up betimes, awakened but ignorant, famishing millions will plunge the country and which, not even the armed force that a powerful government can bring into play, can avert. I have hoped that India will successfully avert the disaster.

Young India, 5-12-1929, p. 396

Economic equality is the master key to non-violent independence. Working for economic equality means abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth on the one hand, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions on the other. A non-violent system of government is clearly an impossibility so long as the wide gulf between the rich and the hungry millions persists. The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent

and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good. I adhere to my doctrine of trusteeship in spite of the ridicule that has been poured upon it. It is true that it is difficult to reach. So is non-violence. But we made up our minds in 1920 to negotiate that steep ascent. We have found it worth the effort,

Constructive Programme, pp. 20-21, (Edn. 1948)

The present inequalities are surely due to people's ignorance. With a growing knowledge of their natural strength, the inequalities must disappear. If the revolution is brought about by violence the position will be reversed, but not altered for the better. With non-violence, i.e. conversion, the new era which people hope for must be born. My approach and appeal are in terms of non-violence pure and undefiled. The French have a noble motto in Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. It is a heritage not for the French only but for all mankind.

What the French never realized, it is open to us to do. Will the princes and the princely landholders and merchants take the lead? It is for them to take the lead, not for the 'have-nots', who have nothing to share with anybody except their pauperism and abjectness.

Harijan, 2-8-1942, p. 249

The socialists and communists say they can do nothing to bring about economic equality today. They will just carry on propaganda in its favour and to that end they believe in generating and accentuating hatred. They say, 'When they get control over the State they will enforce equality.' Under my

plan, the State will be there to carry out the will of the people, not to dictate to them or force them to do its will. I shall bring about economic equality through non-violence, by converting the people to my point of view by harnessing the forces of love as against hatred. I will not wait till I have converted the whole society to my view but will straightaway make a beginning with myself. It goes without saying that I cannot hope to bring about economic equality of my conception, if I am the owner of fifty motor cars or even of ten *bighas* of land. For that I have to reduce myself to the level of the poorest of the poor. That is what I have been trying to do for the last fifty years or more, and so, I claim to be a foremost communist although I make use of cars and other facilities offered to me by the rich. They have no hold on me and I can shed them at a moment's notice, if the interests of the masses demand it.

Harijan, 31-3-1946, p. 64

The liberty of the people should not depend upon the will of an individual however noble and ancient may be his descent. Nor can any person, whether prince or a princely zamindar or merchant, be the sole owner and disposer of possessions hereditary or self-acquired. Every individual must have the fullest liberty to use his talents consistently with equal use by his neighbours but no one is entitled to the arbitrary use of the gains from the talents. He is part of the nation or say the social structure surrounding him. Therefore he can only use his talents not for self only but for the social structure of which he is but a part and on whose sufferance he lives. ...It is because I have despaired of response from the

pillars, that I have thought of moving the masses on whom the pillars (the princes, princely land-holders and merchants) rest. I may not leave a single stone unturned to avoid, if I can, what is undoubtedly a great risk. Hence this appeal.

Harijan, 2-8-1942, p. 249

CHAPTER 22

RURAL DEMOCRACY

I suggest that if India is to evolve along non-violent lines, it will have to decentralize many things. Centralization cannot be sustained and defended without adequate force. Simple homes from which there is nothing to take away require no policing; the palaces of the rich must have strong guards to protect them against dacoity. So must huge factories. Rurally organized India will run less risk of foreign invasion than urbanized India, well equipped with military, naval and air forces.

Harijan, 30-12-1939, p. 391

My idea of village Swaraj is that is it a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops, and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like.

The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own

waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no caste such as we have today with their graded untouchability.

Non-violence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-co-operation will be the sanction of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The government of the village will be conducted by a Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office.

Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue. I have not examined here the question of the relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.

To model such a village may be the work of a life-time. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicineman and school master all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

Harijan, 26-7-1942, p. 238

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or Panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world. It will be trained and prepared to perish in the attempt to defend itself against any onslaught from without. Thus, ultimately, it is the individual who is the unit. This does not exclude dependence on and willing help from neighbours or from the world. It will be free and voluntary play of mutual forces. Such a society is necessarily highly cultured in which every man and woman knows what he or she wants and, what is more, knows that no one should want anything that others cannot have with equal labour.

In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never ascending circles. Life will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. But it will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the village, the latter ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals, never aggressive in their

arrogance but ever humble, sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units.

In this there is no room for machines that would displace human labour and that would concentrate power in a few hands. Labour has its unique place in a cultured human family. Every machine that helps every indiviudal has a place.

Harijan, 28-7-1946, p. 236

A village unit as conceived by me is as strong as the strongest. My imaginary village consists of 1,000 souls. Such a unit can give a good account of itself, if it is well organized on a basis of self-sufficiency.

Harijan, 4-8-1946, p. 252

Society based on non-violence can only consist of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified and peaceful existence.

Harijan, 13-1-1940, pp. 410-11

When Panchayatraj is established, public opinion will do what violence can never do. The present power of the zamindars, the capitalists and the rajas can hold sway only so long as the common people do not realize their own strength. If the people non-co-operate with the evil of *zamindari* or capitalism, it must die of inanition. In Panchayatraj only the Panchayat will be obeyed and the Panchayat can only work through the law of their making.

Harijan, 1-6-1947, p. 172

CHAPTER 23

DEMOCRACY OF THE WEST

Democracy of the West is, in my opinion, only so-called. It has germs in it, certainly, of the true type. But it can only come when all violence is eschewed and malpractices disappear. The two go hand in hand. Indeed malpractice is a species of violence. If India is to evolve the true type, there should be no compromise with violence or untruth.

Harijan, 3-7-1938, p. 242

One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications. Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.

Harijan, 12-11-1938, p. 328

I feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I hold

such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The peoples of Europe have no doubt political power but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore, likely to be applicable. Shorn of all camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence.

Violence on the part of the masses will never remove the disease. Anyway up to now experience shows that success of violence has been short-lived. It has led to greater violence. What has been tried hitherto has been a variety of violence and artificial checks dependent mainly upon the will of the violent. At the crucial moment these checks have naturally broken down. It seems to me, therefore, that sooner or later, the European masses will have to take to non-violence if they are to find their deliverance. That there is no hope of their taking to it in a body and at once does not baffle me. A few thousand years are but a speck in the vast time circle. Someone has to make a beginning with a faith that will not flinch. I doubt not that the masses, even of Europe, will respond, but what is more emergent in point of time is not so much a large experiment in non-violence as a precise grasp of the meaning of deliverance. From what will the masses be delivered? It will not do to have a vague generalization and to answer 'from exploitation and degradation'. Is not the answer this that they want to occupy the status that capital does today? If so, it can be attained only

by violence. But if they want to shun the evils of capital, in other words, if they would revise the viewpoint of capital, they would strive to attain a juster distribution of the products of labour. This immediately takes us to contentment and simplicity, voluntarily adopted. Under the new outlook multiplicity of material wants will not be the aim of life, the aim will be rather restriction consistently with comfort. We shall cease to think of getting what we can but we shall decline to receive what all cannot get. It occurs to me that it ought not to be difficult to make successful appeal to the masses of Europe in terms of economics and a fairly successful working of such an experiment must lead to immense and unconscious spiritual results. I do not believe that the spiritual law works in a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social and the political fields. If the masses of Europe can be persuaded to adopt the view I have suggested, it will be found that violence will be wholly unnecessary to attain the aim and they can easily come to their own by following out the obvious corollaries of non-violence. It may even be that what seems to me to be so natural and feasible for India, may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than the active European masses. But I must reiterate my confession that all my argument is based on suppositions and assumptions and must, therefore, be taken for what it is worth.

Young India, 3-9-1925, p. 304

Science of war leads one to dictatorship, pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead

one to pure democracy. England, France and America have to make their choice.

Harijan, 15-10-1938, p. 290

Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e. sanguinary means. Man may and should shed his own blood for establishing what he considers to be his 'right'. He may not shed the blood of his opponent who disputes his 'right'. The power that armaments give to defend right is nothing compared to the power that non-violence gives to do the same thing and that too with better show of reason. Armaments can show no reason, they can make only a pretence of it.

Harijan, 14-10-1939, pp. 201-02

I see no difference between the Fascist or Nazi powers and the Allies. All are exploiters, all resort to ruthlessness to the extent required to compass their end. America and Britain are very great nations, but their greatness will count as dust before the bar of dumb humanity, whether African or Asiatic.... They have no right to talk of human liberty and all else unless they have washed their hands clean of pollution....Then, but not till then, will they be fighting for a new order.

Harijan, 14-6-1942, p. 188

CHAPTER 24

DEMOCRATIC WORLD FEDERATION

Isolated independence is not the goal of the world-States. It is voluntary interdependence.

Young India, 17-7-1924, p. 236

The better mind of the world desires today not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly interdependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal interdependence rather than independence....I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence.

Young India, 26-12-1924, p. 425

Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being. Without inter-relation with society he cannot realize his oneness with the universe or suppress his egotism. His social interdependence enables him to test his faith and to prove himself on the touchstone of reality. If man were so placed or could so place himself as to be absolutely above all dependence on his fellow-beings he would become so proud and arrogant as to be a veritable burden and nuisance to the world. Dependence on society teaches him the lesson of humility. That a man ought to be able to satisfy most of his essential needs himself is obvious; but it is no less obvious to me that when self-sufficiency is carried to the length of isolating oneself from society

it almost amounts to sin. A man cannot become self-sufficient even in respect of all the various operations from the growing of cotton to the spinning of the yarn. He has at some stage or other to take the aid of the members of his family. And if one may take help from one's own family why not from one's neighbours? Or otherwise what is the significance of the great saying, 'The world is my family'?

Young India, 21-3-1929, p. 93

A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilizing the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

Harijan, 23-9-1939, p. 278

I believe that true democracy can only be an outcome of non-violence. The structure of a world federation can be raised only on a foundation of non-violence, and violence will have to be totally given up in world affairs.

Gandhi'jis Correspondence with the Government, 1942-44, p. 175, (Edn. 1945)

I reiterate my conviction that there will be no peace for the Allies or the world unless they shed their belief in the efficacy of war and its accompanying terrible deception and fraud and are determined to hammer out real peace based on freedom and equality of all races and nations. Exploitation and domination of one nation over another can have no place in a world striving to put an end to

all wars. In such a world only, the militarily weak nations will be free from the fear of intimidation or exploitation.

From a Statement issued by Gandhiji on 17-4-1945 on the Conference of Allied diplomats which was being held then at San Francisco — *The Bombay Chronicle*, 18-4-1945.

It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day, unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself.

Young India, 8-10-1925, p. 345

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in the godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as a chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof. If the recognized leaders of mankind who have control over the engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use, with full knowledge of its implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again

seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and, therefore, increase their material possessions.

Harijan, 16-5-1936, p. 109

Nothing will be found to have gone wrong if mankind recoils from the horrors of war. The blood-letting that men have undergone to the point of whiteness will not have been in vain, if it has taught us that we must freely give our own blood in the place of taking other people's blood, be the cause ever so noble or ignoble.... India will have to decide whether attempting to become a military power she would be content to become, at least for some years, a fifth-rate power in the world without a message in answer to the pessimism...or whether she will, by further refining and continuing her non-violent policy, prove herself worthy of being the first nation in the world using her hard-won freedom for the delivery of the earth from the burden which is crushing her in spite of the so-called victory.

Harijan, 5-5-1946, p. 116

A democrat relies upon the force not of arms his State can flaunt in the face of the world but on the moral force his State can put at the disposal of the world. If by India's effort such a world federation of free and independent States was brought into being, the hope of the Kingdom of God, otherwise called Ramarajya, might legitimately be entertained.

Harijan, 13-7-1947, p. 235

I would not like to live in this world if it is not to be one world.

Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase, Vol. II, p. 90

CHAPTER 25

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

Perhaps never before has there been so much speculation about the future as there is today. Will the world always be one of violence? Will there alwas be poverty, starvation, misery? Will we have a firmer and wide belief in religion, or will the world be godless? If there is to be a great change in society, how will that change be wrought? By war, or revolution? Or will it come peacefully?

Different men give different answers to these questions, each man drawing the plan of tomorrow's world as he hopes and wishes it to be. I answer not only out of belief but out of conviction. The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on non-violence. That is the first law; out of it all other blessings will flow. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked for here and now. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future—the non-violent way—without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning, because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely our greatest obstacle to progress—an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away.

Equal distribution—the second great law of tomorrow's world as I see it—grows out of non-violence. It implies not that the world's goods shall be arbitrarily divided up but that each man shall have the wherewithal to supply his natural needs, no more. As a crude example, if one man requires a

quarter-pound of flour per week and another needs five pounds, each should not be given arbitrarily a quarter-pound, or five pounds; both should be able to satisfy their wants.

Here we come to perhaps the most vital question connected with the shaping of tomorrow's world. How is this equal distribution to be brought about? Must the wealthy be dispossessed of all their holdings?

Non-violence answers no. Nothing that is violent can be of lasting benefit to mankind. Forcible dispossession would deprive society of many great gifts; the wealthy man knows how to create and build, his abilities must not be lost. Instead, he must be left in possession of his wealth so that he may use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and act as trustee for the remainder, to be expended for the benefit of society. There have been and are such men. To my mind, as soon as a man looks upon himself as a servant of society, earns for its sake, spends for its sake, then his earnings are good and his business venture is constructive.

But does not this whole idea of non-violence imply a change in human nature? And does history at any time record such a change? Emphatically it does. Many an individual has turned from the mean, personal, acquisitive point of view to one that sees society as a whole and works for its benefit. If there has been such a change in one man, there can be the same change in many.

I see no poverty in the world of tomorrow no wars, no revolutions, no bloodshed. And in that world there will be a faith in God greater and deeper than ever in the past. The very existence of the world, in a broad sense, depends on religion. All attempts to root it out will fail.

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